

THE
INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY

IN CONNEXION

WITH

a Harbour at Rimouski.



Rimouski:
PRINTING OFFICE OF *La Voix du Golfe.*
—
1869.

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The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

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A FEW OBSERVATIONS

ON

The best locality for a Harbour in the lower parts of the River S. Lawrence in connexion with the Intercolonial Railway.

To choose a suitable Harbour in the lower part of the St. Lawrence in connexion with the Intercolonial Railway, is a question of much interest to the British American Provinces, but specially to the commercial community: it is therefore hoped that some remarks on the subject will be deemed of some moment to the reader.

The question of a Harbour of Refuge has long been under consideration by Pilots and mariners in general, and particularly by the parties interested in the prosperity of the several localities claiming a right to possess that national and long contemplated improvement.

In 1856 a Pamphlet on the subject was published in favour of Rimouski or St. Barnabé Harbour, and approved of by sixteen Pilots, † the best acquainted with

† Joseph Pouliot,
Joseph Lavoie,
Henri Lavoie,
Octave Lavoie,
Chs. Chouinard, père.
Chas. Chouinard, fils.
Louis M. Lavoie,
Amable St. Laurent,
Eustache Doiron,
Isidore Rioux,
Pierre Proux, père.
Félix Chouinard,
Pierre Drapeau,

Anselme Côté,
Hilaire Jouvin,
Benjamin Pineau,
John Lavoie, Père.
Silvestre Côté,
Peter Ross,
Cyprien Raimond,
Régule Banville,
John Lavoie,
Charles Ruest,
Pierre Proux, fils.
John St. Pierre,
Charles Fortin.

the navigation of this part of the St. Lawrence, and by masters of vessels of long experience ; their opinions founded upon true knowledge and practical experience must have a greater weight than the recommendation of men unacquainted with the navigation of this part of the country, and more or less influenced by wrong or interested informations, or by the first sight of a sheet of water surrounded with high and rugged mountains.

In 185...a Committee of the House of Assembly collected informations on the same subject, which shows that, even before the construction of the "Intercolonial Railway" was decided, and Major Robinson's line adopted, the question of choosing the most suitable place for a harbour of refuge was considered of no mean importance.

But now it becomes of a much higher interest to place the question before the public as, not merely a harbour of refuge for the navigation of the coast, but a harbour in connexion with the Intercolonial Railway, well adapted to all the wants of intercontinental navigation, is in contemplation. Three different places, old Bic harbour, Rimouski harbour, and Father Point, are under consideration ; but before any one of those places be fit for such a harbour as is needed, large and expensive wharves will have to be constructed. In laying out, in works of that kind, heavy sums of money, is it not to be expected that the country will require to be well informed where such wharves or breakwaters will better accomodate and protect from danger, (especially at a late season in the fall, and early in the spring,) vessels of all sizes, and allow sailing vessels to enter or leave the Harbour with any wind : the contemplated improvement, if properly located, being

in connection with the Intercolonial Railway, and being intended to open to Canadian and Western trade a Harbour in British waters nearer than Portland or Boston, and a month or more later in the fall than the port of Quebec, and free from ice about the beginning of March and sometimes nearly all winter.

The only object of the present remarks is to show the comparative advantages and disadvantages of old Bic and Rimouski as a more or less convenient locality for a Harbour of refuge in the general interest of the country.

BIC.

The *St. Lawrence Pilot*, comprising sailing directions for the gulf and river by Rear-Admiral H. W. Bayfield R. N. Surveyor, contains the following description of old Bic Harbour : (*)

* Capt. Lambly who was employed three years as commander of the gouvernement vessel stationed off Father Point mentions Old Bic in nearly the same terms as Capt. Bayfield.

“ Old Bic is a very good place for *small* vessels to shelter from *Westerly* winds. ”

“ Anchors in three fathoms at low water. ”—p. 10.

“ The Bay Ha ! ha ! is of no use to large vessels. ”—p. 11

“ To beat from Father Point to Bic Island, ships may make as free with the South shore by the lead as they please, observing the nearer they are to the shore, the stronger the flood tide, they may safely stand to 6, 7 or 8 fathoms.

“ The distance from the East end of the reef to old Bic harbour is one mile ; between them is a Bay of no use to shipping, being all foul ground and shoal water. ”

“ The East part of the reef of the Cap à l'Original is covered at high water, and is all rocks and dry at low water. ”

“ If strangers, the safest way is to haul to the northward.

“Old Bic Harbour, distant $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the westward of Barnaby Island, dries at low water and has many Rocks in it: two round and high rocky islets called the Bicoques, will be seen extending to the westward of its point and diminishing the breadth of the entrance to two thirds of a mile.

“Midway between these rocky islets and the west point of the harbour, small vessels may anchor in old Bic road in three fathoms at low water.”

This west point of Old Bic Harbour, called *Cape enragé*, in consequence of its being surrounded, even out into deep water, by a great quantity of large boulders or broken rocks, is a very dangerous place for vessels to approach. As there is only 18 ft. of water even in the very deepest part of the entrance, which depth is not sufficient for Steam-ships or large vessels, and as the bottom rises as you go farther in, a wharf must be built extending to the open sea in order to make a new harbour, not in old Bic Harbour, as ought to be reasonably expected, but outside of its entrance. The only convenient place is from the western “Bicoque” extending N. W. which appears to be the most suitable direction.”

“Indeed all the way from the Island of Bicquott to the Eastward of the S. E. reef of Bic, the ground is very uneven, having 10, 12, and in some places 5 fathoms and all foul ground: so that ships being near Bic Island and not acquainted, and thick weather, should stand off.—p. 14.

“If to the Eastward of Barnaby Island and fine weather, they may anchor in 7 or 8 fathoms and may do the same all the way to Bic.”

(*Sailing Directions for the River St. Lawrence from Cape Chatt to the Island of Bic, by Capt. John Lambly. Quebec. 1808.*)

But, as it is stated in the pamphlet heretofore mentioned, at a distance of 1950 ft : from the Bicoque there are only 18 ft : of water at low spring tides, and a further extension of 1000 ft : of the wharf would be necessary to allow large vessels a shelter, and at the outer end a cross extension to the S. W. to protect vessels from a heavy sea rolling in along the wharf during N. W. winds. As the Bicoque however is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the main land opposite, a second wharf of about that length ($\frac{3}{4}$ mile) would be required to communicate with the Harbour wharf.

If, with these or other improvements, a safe, spacious, deep and convenient Harbour for Steam-ships and sailing vessels of all sizes, with an entrance by which ships could sail in and out with any wind and without danger, (such a Harbour as will hereafter be indispensably required in the lower part of the St. Lawrence,) could be constructed at old Bic with better advantages than anywhere else, old Bic should be adopted without any hesitation.

But old or *new* Bic could never afford any of the above advantages. With the contemplated wharf no sailing vessel will be able to enter this Harbour with S. W., S., S. E. or E. wind.

Vessels bound to this Harbour will have then to find shelter somewhere else, till the wind changes and blows from a proper quarter, and if in a gale of easterly wind a vessel had lost her anchors, would she not be exposed to certain destruction ?

Without even a wharf to close up a part of the entrance, a vessel of middle size could not leave this Harbour with N. W., N., or N., E. wind.

A small brigantine drawing 8 ft. of water which wintered in Bic a few years ago, being ready to sail, with fair wind, had to wait over a week for a change of the wind to get out of the Harbour.

Who would like to enter his vessel in a place from where he could not sail when he was ready and had fair wind? Would trade and navigation, depending for success, on speed, accept of such conditions?

If the above mentioned wharf was built outside of the Bicoque, the only place where a large vessel could stand would be in the small Harbour included between the outer part of the Wharf and *Cape enragé*, protected only by the wharf from the full power of N. E., N. and N. W. winds, but too limited for such a vessel to ride on her anchor with surety, as the west side of this narrow passage is a bold and dangerous shore with large broken rocks rising from the bottom even out in deep water, and any large vessel leaving the Harbour with any wind but S. or S. E. would be exposed to strike upon these rocks before she could get clear of the end of the wharf; and, should she get safely out of the Harbour, right in her way, and much less than a mile distance, is a reef covered at half tide.

When Capt: Bayfield, several years after he had surveyed this part of the St. Lawrence, was asked by interested parties a certificate in favor of Bic, he never would recommend this Harbour as fit for large vessels, the question being then in contemplation: but it takes over four pages of his *sailing directions* to give a description of the dangerous reefs, &c. with which the Bic Island is surrounded and others in its roadway; and he concludes by saying that he does not advise vessels without a Pilot to pass between Bic Island and the

main land in foggy weather, unless they were well acquainted with the place, and he says that they should examine the directions and Maps, as he considers this place *difficult and dangerous* ; and it is well known that all the Captains of the Atlantic Steamers are unwilling to risk their ships in this dangerous passage. However, if Bic was adopted for the Harbour in connection with Intercolonial Railway, steamers should have to go through this difficult and dangerous place on their way to the Harbour, and other vessels should have to sail around Bic Island, and in this passage, where they would have often to remain several days waiting for a fair wind to enter Harbour, and when these ships would arrive from Sea in foggy weather or at night and without a Pilot, they would have no other place to anchor.

The improved Bic Harbour would be covered with ice early in the fall and later in the spring than any other below Quebec, as the necessary wharves would break off the sea and partly close up the entrance, so as to make a sort of a lake with but a narrow outlet.

Now, the main object in making a good Harbour in this part of the country being to lengthen the season of navigation by the St. Lawrence, this point requires to be noticed and examined with the greatest care and will have a great weight in the selection of a proper locality.

RIMOUSKI.

According to Capt. Bayfield, "the eastern point of Barnaby Island is three miles W. by N. from Father Point, and between them is the anchorage or road of Rimouski, where vessels ride throughout the summer to take in cargoes of lumber."

“ They lie moored in 4 or 5 fathoms at low water with excellent holding ground, and sheltered from W. by N. round by South to E. N. E.—The best sheltered berth is with the eastern point of Barnaby Island bearing W. by N. Rimouski church, S. S. W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. and Father Point E. N. E. in 4 fathoms at low water spring tides over mud bottom.

“ Small vessels can anchor farther to the westward in 3 fathoms at low water with the east end of the rocks of the eastern point of Barnaby Island bearing N. W. by W. and distant one quarter of a mile. ”

Capt. Bayfield plainly shows that Rimouski or Barnaby Harbour being well sheltered, extensive, deep, with good bottom, is exactly the place required for a connexion with the Intercolonial Railway and the sea in the lower part of the St. Lawrence ; and it may be added that not an equal place, after necessary improvements, could be found in this part of the country.

L. J. D’Auteuil, Esq., P. L. S. gives the following certificate after actual measurement, made on the 18th november last: “ I went to a certain place, mentioned by Capt. Bayfield in his survey of the river St. Lawrence in 1834, as being very suitable to anchor large vessel. This place is situated about 2 miles West of Father Point, and $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile East of Barnaby Island.

“ I found there, by actual measurement, 22 ft: of water at the lowest tides, and from that point the depth increases rapidly towards the N, N. E., but towards the S. S. W. and W. the bottom rises 6 inches every 100 ft: and is all clay.

“ I found that the distance N. W. from the above mentioned place to Rimouski wharf is 3313 ft: and bout $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile to the Point called *Pouliot Point*.”

If a wharf of 1000 or 1500 ft : lying N. N. E. was built on the N. W. side of this Harbour, and a short break water of about 500 ft : lying N. W. on the N. E. side, with a passage between both, ships of all sizes drawing 22 ft : (1) could enter and lie with safety and also ride throughout the whole season as well as during the heaviest spring or fall gales, sheltered from every point of the compass, which is plainly understood by a glance at Bayfield's Map or at the subjoined sketch, where can be perceived the main land on one side, Pouliot's and Father Point on another side, Rimouski wharf and Barnaby Island on the third side, and between the Harbour and the open sea, the intended wharf and breakwater.

And if a ship had lost her anchors, she could easily sail into the Harbour with any wind, and moor at some of the wharves, and if by mishap she missed her mooring at the wharves, she could run ashore without danger, the bottom being soft and clayey.

In dark nights, ships coming from the East would have in sight the Light at Father Point and another small light that ought to be fixed on the outer end of the wharf, which might lead them into the Harbour even without a Pilot ; and if they were coming from the west, they would have Biquete Light and the one on the wharf.

Between the main land, Barnaby Island and the intended wharves, would be found another safe and extensive Harbour for vessels drawing less than 23 ft : of water, and the most convenient place for any vessel to

(1) Should a greater depth be required, by placing the wharves a little further on to the N. E. we might obtain 30 ft. or more.

winter as the bottom is soft and the water increases in depth gradually from the shore to the outer wharves. The actual Rimouski wharf might be made to serve as a roadway from the shore to the Harbour.

Rimouski wharf, though lying in a bay and inside of Barnaby Island, is clear from ice till the month of January and sometimes later. When the *Persia* came to Bic on the 26th Dec., remained several days, landed there with difficulty only a part of the troops on board, and had to take the rest back to Halifax ; it is a well known fact that when she passed Rimouski wharf, the tide being then up, she might have moored at the wharf and laid there for several hours, during which all the troops and war stores might have been landed, and she might have left for England the same day, the wharf being free from ice.

About the beginning of March, and sometimes earlier, the ice breaks away from the wharf, and the St. Lawrence from Rimouski down is soon free from any heavy floating ice and open to navigation for steamers and sailing vessels. But the intended wharves protecting the Harbour, being farther from the shore and in a stronger current, which would run through their several passages, would be surrounded with ice, if ever they were, only in the middle of winter, and whenever steam or sailing vessels could pass through the gulf, they could also come to Rimouski and enter the Harbour.

Rimouski, possessing the best Harbour in this part of the Province, the lowest terminus of the Intercolonial Railway near the River, as well as a College, a Convent, and being the centre of all religious, commercial and judiciary affairs of a large district, this beautiful

locality will fast increase in population, industry, trade and wealth. Situated at the very point where the Inter-colonial arrives from the back and extensive agricultural country, extending from the northern limits of New-Brunswick to the waters of the St. Lawrence, Rimouski must forcibly become the port in connexion with the Railway.

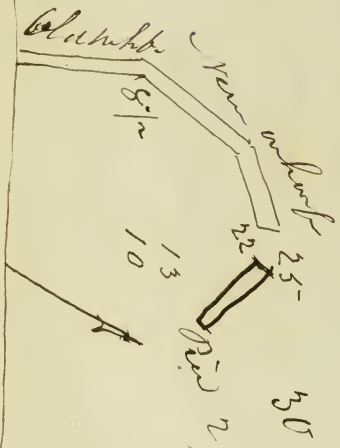
The lovely surrounding scenery, the extensive and level lands along the shore with a gentle rise towards the south, the fertile soil of the surrounding neighbourhood and of all the district of Rimouski, the great water powers of the Rimouski River, with its splendid Flour and Saw mills and other factories, give this locality all that could be desired in order to form, in a short time, a commercial and industrious City : and when compared with the high and rocky mountains, deep gulleys and broken lands surrounding Old Bic in all directions, the mind is forcibly inclined to believe that nothing, but an act inconsistent with common sense, could cause a preference to be given to this wild and dangerous place, fit for nothing else but a solitary meditation.



Marinade

Garment-

Hand of Steamship -



Pockets pt-

Factor pt-

